Statement

(Cont'd from front page)

traly local bill passed. There derable delay in getting the bill rough, and I was in Raleigh three while the Legislature was in content. On each occasion I talked with members of the Legislature rela live to our bill and urged its approval by the Committee having it for consideration. I wrote letters when for it, the reason we needed it, the fact that it had been approved by the Attorney General and the Bond Attorneys of New York. I telephoned to Raleigh several times about it and was constantly after its passage. When finally did pass the Legislature 1 wrote to the Secretary of State and secured certified copies, one of which was sent to the Bond Attorneys in New York so they could see just what was enacted into law. Then we wo seeded with the calling of the elecadvertising the same, calling for new registration of those desiring to wote in the election. I met with the registrars and explained the law te them with reference to the new regfstration, again met with the Medical By various groups to explain the plan an effort to get the public to understand the set up. The election was exceedingly favorable and immediate by afterward I helped canvass the election and presented the Board of in the second and the entire proceedings from beginning to end were copied into the August of 1945, after the election, it Bridges. Chairman of the Board, and York relative to the matter, first to eral aid for the hospitals as it was becoming evident that the bond money would not be sufficient to build as After the boud money was finally New York and the Bond Attorneys bill with the Commissioners. 1 felt als at the Federal Works Administra ject will cost and nobder howls a

purchaser and sent check to the Coun check into the title of the land if possible to receive it.

the trustees for the hospitals were mortgages and judgments. From this this, had them call and personally interest in it, and if this party or the prepared their official oath. They parties do not then pay suit could be met in the Courthouse for their first entered. After working on the taxes meeting and I appeared beore them, for several months and realizing the explained the new law to them and tremendous amount of work necesendeavored to help them in getting sary to get the necessary information themselves organized. Previously I in order to really clear up the tax tion, the passing of the bond orders, had met with the old board of the sale certificates, 1 informed the Com-Shelby Hospital several times, here missioners that I simply could not do ing them to correctly pass the data such work for the amount of the pen necessary to transfer the hospital alties, interest, etc., on the tax sale property to the county. I later met certificates and that if they secured with the new board Trustees at the anyone to really do the job of clear-Shelby Hospital and in every possi- ing up the certificates they would Bociety and explained the new law to ble way endeavored to be of assist have to pay for it. They inquired them. I presented the various matters ance in the complicated task of get- what I had in mind for checking the to the Commissioners to be passed by ting them set up and ready to funct- | same and I told them \$25.00 for those them and finally we had the election ion. The Executive Committee of the I checked, with the penalties, inter on July, 7, 1945. I was called upon trustees for Kings Mountain wished est. etc., on all to be paid me. For to secure an option on the Plonk pro- checking a title for a farm loan thru for the hospitals, talked to several in perty in Kings Mountain for the site the Federal Land Bank the average of their hospital and in the late sum- fee, I think, is about \$50.00. mer of 1945 began work on this, work is not exactly the same but checking the title back on the land, comparable. They discussed the matcorrecting certain phases of the ti- ter and decided that the tax situation the so as to make it correct, drew an should be cleared up. Both Mr. Wash option for the Plonk heirs to sign burn and Mr. Bridges, Continussioners data to be approved, to show the and later drew deeds for the Plonk are merchants and they stated at mesults of the election. The results heirs. Mr. Williams and the Kings that time that in their businesses they Mountain Bonded Warehouse to sign made people pay them or they so as to convey the property to the ceeded with suits, that they ers and two certified copies there of Finne You the site of the hospital in found such was good business. It was Kings Mountain. I prepared deeds for felt by the Board of Commissioners were sent to the Bond Attorneys. In the Plonk heirs and the county to that if people were allowed to get by sign so as to provide a new street without paying their taxes it wound was decided by the Commissioners by this property and this strip of grow into a very bad situation, that that it would be wise for Mr. Glee A. land was conveyed to the City of it would be known by others Kings Mountain for a new street. I these certain people had not me to go to Washington and New handled that entire matter to the sat. and others would therefore naturally exceedingly hard. It was a full time isfaction of the hospital trustees, the not pay theirs, while if all were made job and I spent full time upon it. The publicity has not been entirely endenvor in Washington to get Fed county and everyone else so far as I to pay others would know about it ever heard.

first planned due to increased costs received in the Spring of 1946, havof labor and materials: second, to ing been working upon the matter talk with the Federal Works Admin- since the Fall of 1944, having made istration relative to financial help in several trips relative to same and making the plans for the hospitals; expended untold time on the matter and third, to talk with bankers in I then and not until then placed my there relative to the proper time to that a fee to me of \$5,000.00, which offer the bonds for sale on the mar. was 1 1.4 percent of the amount inket. We did go to Washington and volved, was fair and entirely fair to New York, secured the assistance of the county. Nothing comparable to Senator Clyde R. Hoey, talked with this had been handled in the County various officials about Federal Aid before. Architects are paid 5 percent and talked at length with the offici- of the amount they estimate the protion and in particular with Mr. Cham bout their fee and I don't either. I berlain there. We had the matter ex | had done a good job, not one sig plained to us, secured application had been made from the preparation Blanks for the Federal Aid and then o. the bill to the sale of the bonds. went on to New York. We contacted The Commissioners at first thought the Bond Attorney there and bankers my bill was high, so I withdrew it relative to the sale of the bonds, be entirely and stated to them that Fag keenly interested in saving for would leave the amount entirely to the county as much as possible, real them, that they could pay me what fizing that the saving of 1 percent in they thought wise, taking into consid Serest for 20 years on \$400,000.00 eration the time and efforts I had would amount to a savings of \$80. put on the matter. On May 6, 1946, 000.00 over the period of time. Incl. they decided to pay me this amount that when the bonds were later sold of Masslich and Mitchell, the New terest rate of 1.038 percent and the | was paid and promptly paid Masslica so far as I have the information. No ' - received for my work on this hosore knows just what savings were pital matter slightly over 1 percent made for the county by our work in and I still contend that this is fair With reference to the tax matters with it, but we do feel that a lot was handled by me as county attornet, written application to the Local Go- tax suits upon the docket and unpaid Tebtedness, etc. and sent this com- the great majority of the property who do pay to leave the unpaid ones promptly. Mr. Charles Dilling, County Auditor, and I spent every working me of all outstanding tax sale cerpaying its attorney for collection of delinquent taxes the exact amount of the tax certificate over and above the original amount of the taxes. which original amount was retained by the county. Former county attorneys had written and written the tax delinquents writing those whose names were shown on the certificates. Those remaining were those who it was evident, would have to be forced by suit or the absolute knowledge that suit would be entered unless paid promptly. Under the laws of North Carolina in tax foreclosure suits it is necessary to make all persons, or care porations, having an interest in the property, parties to such call a

cured the bonds, mailed them to the order to do this it is necessary for Federal Aid with the Federal name of John Doe. It is necessary to pushing vigorously these tax matters, Works Administration and am still check first of all the deed or deeds but did feel likewice that it was a working upon this, receiving new ap to John Doe on the records ir order job that should be done, that the deplication blanks this week from Wash to secure a legal description of the linquent tax situation should be clear ington. The Congress recently passed property itself. Then all deeds given ed up and I proceeded to do it. a law allowing aid to hospitals for by John Doe have to be checked to I am happy to report that, as T said construction, the amount to be one see if anyone has secured the land of in the outset, the tax situation in third of the amount the county puts any part of it. John Doe has to be | Cleveland County is in the best concured we should receive \$200,000.00 in | mortgage or deeds of trust on the remains through the 1944 taxes (1945 Federal Aid for our hospitals and land, he has to be checked to see if are just being advertised now) only hack home to the Committee mem- that is what I um now working upon there are any judgments of record about twelve tax cases outstanding in and expect to continue until received. against him. If he has sold the land in the county records, one of these county more to collect your faxes than for any part of it, then that party represents land for which I can find the amount of the taxes so the coun-In 1945 after the bond election had having an interest in the land has to no deed recorded, cannot locate the carried and the money was assured he checked as to deeds, deeds of trust property at all, two represent estates appointed by the Board of Commission information secured it can then be de being cleared up and payment ers. 1 wrote to each of them about termined who owns the land or any been promised, in two suits have been

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The prohad that smaller as the time went along. Ac-

ced and this I did. I wish to make it entirely clear bring suit in court, but only in those es paid. It was much better to settle

to matter and such work is not calculat- when I get after them and then that ing at his profession. First of all he ty Treasurer for the bond money. secure the necessary information, realized that many people would not tered. Since that time I riled applications Say a tax sale certificate is in the like me as well for handling and into it. Thus, if this aid can be so checked to see if he has given any dition of any county I know. There policy to follow. Should a person own

> which I checked and find are now has filed and the others represent persons either listing the property of buying the property since then who, 1 have been informed, are in service and against whom suit should not be entered at present. Thus, so far as humanly possible the delinquent tax situation in Cleveland County has been cleared up.

I would also like to make it en. irely clear that I have handleed no money belonging to the county. A: the outset when I began this tax work I made it plain that I would under no circumstances take any tax receipts to my office, that if a tax reccipt left the tax office the tax collector should have his money Ъе forehand. This has been followed strictly. If, upon checking and finding some person due the taxes, some person sent me a check or money order I gave the same promptly to the tax collector, secured the receipt and mailed it to the person paying. I se-1. settlamonte frami parante ny states, persons away from working in defense jobs. others who had moved away but had purchases property here upon which taxes were

due. Of all the thinfs said about me in me. I wish to make it clear that so this instance, no person has said I was lazy nor can any person truthfully ay this. Determined to clear this mat ter of delinquent taxes up and wishpaid ing to get through with it I will work The Courthouse Janitor can tell anyand the delinquent list would grow | one wishing the information that for a long period of time I secured a key have been made before the true facts ordingly, they instructed me to pro to the office of the Register of Deeds on Saturday afternoons, when per to print anything sensational others were out of their offices and easy to so picture a matter as to hat it was not agreed that I should the Courthouse was closed, in order he paid for tax suits, but for check that I might work upon these tax ture it in an entirely light. A pering into the matter to get information cases. It is not easy working over so as to proceed. In every single time, mental work at a continuous smeared, it is something a person en rse I could possibly do so did not pace is hard but being determined to deavors for years to build up and can lear the matter up I did keep at it so easily be harmed. I have lived in where it was necessary to get the tax- until this was done. If I have made this community for over twenty years. my mistake in this matter I feel that without suit if possible, as it saved it is in working so hard on it. that gentleman, a civic minded citizen and the tax payer the court costs. In a if I had let the matters drag over a to always do my part in all phases large number of cases, after checking period of six or seven years, working of the community life. I have probainto the matter and finding just slowly on the cases, no one would bly made plenty of mistakes, but who who had an interest in the property, have objected as the money paid me has not? I can honestly say that I I contacted the proper party and they would have been spread out. What have at all times endeavored to do

to ed to make friends. I realized this, it will cost them more if suit is en-

Something has been said about the fact that in some instances the tax certificates represented small amounts due the county and that on those particular tax certificates it cost the county more than it received in return. In several instances this was true. However, it was 'a question of ing a small amount be allowed to get by without paying his taxes? Should it be said to him "It will cost the must get good fees as the years go by, y will just forget you owe them?" Or should everyone be treated exactly alike and made to pay irrespective of the amount due? It took just as much time to check into the Have you? records to find who owned any interest in the small lot, whether there were deeds made conveying any in terest in it, any deeds of trust, mortgages or judgments against those hav ing any interest therein, as it did against the larger property owners. The Federal Government does not regard the cost when any sum is due it but proceeds to collect. The Com missioners, as business men. thought 1000.00 for about two hours work. He all should be made to pay and being had worked long at his profession,

will pay better in the future and all should pay their part. You wouldn't like your neighbor to go without pay ing his taxes upon his lot, however small, when you had to pay yours.

I have been greatly hurt by the talk and publicity given this matter. especially by the action of the Bar Aspublicity to it in local and State pa- handled apy money for which I pers without giving me one chance to | not account.

explain to them. It did not even extend me the courtesy of getting my side of the matter or of talking to me about it. Something eise is behind this matter other than the fees paid far as I am concerned I welcome any investigation the bar association or anyone else wishes to make; I have a record of the tax sale certificates turned over to me and I will be glad to cooperate in every possible way. fair, only one side of the picture has been given and in several statements were determined. It is easy for a pa look badly or it can. if it desired, pi son's character should not be lightly have endeavored to be a christian

has to attend college. I attended Wake Forest College for five years, working there to pay my way through for four of those years. After getting a license to practice law it takes nearly ive years to learn by experience just how to do it, and about that length of time to start really to make a living. A lawyer has to spend several thousand dollars for law books to continue from year to year to buy these. His knowledge and his ability to get what a client wants done is his stock in trade, and is his time. or he had rather have been a mer chant, automobile dealers, real estate man, or have some other trade. Just why lawyers, however, should object to another making good fees is a new one. I've never heard of it before.

As to whether I have been paid any excessive fees for my legal work is a question of opinion. I could take a charge made by any person or concern from their books and in my opinion it might be an excessive char ge, in the opinion of the person making it the charge would be reasonable. I know of a doctor who recently performed an operation and charged \$1,so instructed I proceeded against all knew how to do the job right, and aike. Certainly there was nothing dis the patient .ecovered. I know of a honest about this policy. In the long local lawyer who. I am told, recently run, by this action; those owing taxes received \$35,000.00 for legal services performed in one case. I know of a local lawyer who I am told, for a period of years received ten (10 percent) percent of all farm loans made by him, receiving \$500.00 for a \$5,-000.00 loan on a farm and so on. Did

any of the lawyers object to that and demand an investigation? No one sociation in taking action and giving can truthfully say that I have over did

> Finally, I would like to repeat that I have handled no county money, was employed to do legal work and did it.I was paid for it. I have not done wrong. I think my friends will understand; the others will not want to understand.

Yours very truly,

HENRY B. EDWARDS. The foregoing statement of Henry B. Edwards. County Attorney, has been read to us, we approve and endorse the same, and the facts contained therein are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief Mr. Max Washburn is in New York. He was contacted by Mr. Bridges over the telephone and Mr. Bridges was authorized by him to put his signature to this statement.

G. A. BRIDGES. Max Washburn,

D. D. Lattimore.

County Commissioners of Cleveland County.

In a personal statement concerning the matter. Board Chairman Glee A. Bridges said Wednesday:

"I admit to making mistakes, probably in county affairs as well as in my personal and business affairs.

paid, with the absolute assurance that is the difference? In the long run it the right thing, to be honest and fair, "I have done nothing crooked and if they did not do so promptly suit is certainly better to get it cleared friendly with my fellow man. I still nothing to be ashamed of. As far as would be entered in court. This was up as quickly as possible. Many peo- say that in this matter I have done I am personally concerned, the county s mean and distasteful job, no one ple who have not been paying their no wrong, my conscience is entirely books are open to any citizen who ikes to pay taxes, especially those ve nothing to hide. taxes for years until forced to do so to investiga owe are now paying without giving any Maybe it might be well for the who find out later that they "If any of you who read this don't taxes and in many instances did not trouble, knowing full well that if public to understand just what a law make any mistakes. come to see me. I know about it until I checked the they do not they will have to pay yer has to do in order to make a liv | want to shake hands with you."

dentally, it should be remembered if I would pay the fees and expenses that the county here secured the low. York Bond Attorneys, and., this beest interest rate in its istory, and in- ing entirely satisfactory with me, I lowest rate of any county in the state and Mitchell the sum of \$602.88. Three this regard, naturally the existing and entirely fair to the county. bond sale conditions had a lot to do myed for the county. Incidentally, let me first make it plain that I when the old No. 6 Township hospital have been working upon the delinbonds were sold two years ago the quent taxes for nearly three years. interest rate was 6 percent. Before When I became county attorney the the bonds were sold in 1946 I made fact that there were large numbers of ernment Commission for the sale of tax sale certificates outstanding had mame, giving comprehensive data rel already been called to the attention stive to the county, its property val of the Commissioners. They did not nation, rates of taxation, bonded in- consider this a healthy condition. If mission certified copies of each pro- owners of the county pay their taxes medings passed by the Commission- and some do not it does not seem to ers, election results and every single be fair to the county or to those phase of the entire election proceedings I finally, in order to get the alone and the Commissioners decided matter through in in Raleigh, had to that all should be made to settle up make a trip there to talk with the officials, explained the matter to them and then secured the approval day of two weeks in the tax office of the commission, which under the checking the tax sale certificates and has is necessary hefore any local unit locating the tax receipts. Formerly may sell bonds in North Carolina. the tax receipts were pulled from the I then prepared the data for a bond books when tax sale certificates were prospectus to be printed and distribu is such (this is not done any more but ted over the country to all bond buy the tax receipts are left in the books ing houses being articularly careful until paid) and a list was made by to see that each secured a copy so as to make the competition as keen w tificates. At that time the county was possible and thus insure the low rate of interest. When the bonds were sold I secured bids for the printing of the the penalty, interest, etc., added to bonds, having specimen copies sent here so as to select the one the Commissioners finally approved, taking the low bid on these. The bonds were printed, sent to me by express to be igned by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and the Clerk to Board. I supervised this, helding a of the 400 bonds for each signaof the Chairman and the Clerk inced the county seal on each checking each to be sure it way done and then mailed the in Releigh for their apto Treasurer then

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